

Message Text

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO TEL AVIV CAIRO

USUN GENEVA FM TEHRAN NOV 12 REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ME

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST AT INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE W. EUROPE/US OPPOSITION,
GENERAL COMMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CON-
FERENCE (TEHRAN) TOOK SERIES OF POSITIONS NOV 10-12
IN EFFECT REJECTING ISRAELI POLICIES AND CONCERNS.
END SUMMARY

2. FIRST RESOLUTION ADOPTED NOVEMBER 10 CRITICIZED
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ISRAEL BY IMPLICATION FOR FAILURE TO APPLY FOURTH

GENEVA CONVENTION (CIVILIANS) IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. ISRAEL MAINTAINED IT HAS COOPERATED WITH ICRC, WHILE DISAGREEING ON JURIDICAL GROUNDS RE FORMAL APPLICATION OF CONVENTION. EFFORTS BY USG AND OTHER DELS TO SOFTEN RESOLUTION FAILED AND RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY LARGE MAJORITY WITH FIVE ABSTENTIONS (US, UK, NETHERLANDS, FRANCE, WEST GERMANY) AND ONE OPPOSED (ISRAEL).

GK3. ISRAEL INTRODUCED RESOLUTION NOVEMBER 11 CALLING FOR STRICT APPLICATION OF THIRD GENEVA CONVENTION (POWS) IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. RESOLUTION INCLUDED FOUR PARAGRAPHS DETAILING SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CONVENTION REQUIREMENTS FOR POW LISTS, CAPTURE CARDS, AND REPATRIATION OF SICK AND WOUNDED. IN ACCEPTING RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMISSION CHAIRMAN NOTED THESE PARAGRAPHS WERE CLOSE TO BEING INCONSISTENT WITH CONFERENCE RULES AND INVITED AMENDMENTS TO REMOVE OFFENDING PARAGRAPHS. BEFORE SUCH AMENDMENTS COULD BE OFFERED, INDIAN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE OBSERVED THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO DISREGARD ENTIRE RESOLUTION AND MOVE TO NEXT AGENDA ITEM. CHAIRMAN ACCEPTED THIS AS MOTION WITH ABSOLUTE PRECEDENCE, AND CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE VOTE. HEAVY MAJORITY VOTED TO MOVE TO NEXT AGENDA ITEM AND THUS NOT TO CONSIDER ISRAELI RESOLUTION, WITH 18 OPPOSED (USG AND WESTER EUROPEANS) AND A FEW ABSTENTIONS.

4. THERE FOLLOWED A SERIES OF STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT OF ICRC, WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS AND RED CROSS SOCIETIES, AND HOLY SEE REGRETTING DECISION WHICH WOULD DENY CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR ICRC'S EFFORTS ON POWS IN MIDDLE EAST. CHAIR RESPONDED BY INVITING NEW DRAFT RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION.

5. SUCH TEXT WAS SUBMITTED NOVEMBER 12 BY WESTERN EUROPEAN RED CROSS SOCIETIES LED BY NORWAY, BELGIUM, SWITZERLAND, AND WEST GERMANY. DRAFT CALLED ATTENTION TO ICRC STATEMENTS AND ENDORSED STRICT APPLICATION OF POW CONVENTION TO MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. EGYPT, INDIA, AND OTHERS MOVED TO AMEND TEXT BY DELETING REFERENCE TO POW CONVENTION AND SUBSTITUTING GENERAL CALL FOR COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF ALL GENEVA CONVENTIONS, WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OUT SINGLING OUT POWS IN PARTICULAR. KEY VOTE CAME ON MOTION TO CONSIDER EGYPT-INDIAN TEXT AS SUBSTITUTE OTHER

THAN AMENDMENT, A PROCEDURE WHICH WOULD HAVE ENABLED CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT BOTH PROPOSALS AS SEPARATE RESOLUTIONS. MOTION TO THIS EFFECT WAS DEFEATED BY USUAL HEAVY MAJORITY WITH SLIGHTLY LARGER GROUP DISSENTING.

6. AT THIS STAGE GOVERNMENTS AGAIN EXPRESSED REGRET AT TURN OF EVENTS, AND CHAIRMAN SAID HE WOULD ENTERTAIN KURTHER REVISED TEXT FOR CONSIDERATION LATER IN DAY. UK RED CROSS TOOK LEAD IN DRAFTING, AND FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY. BEGIN TEXT: THE GENERAL COMMISSION, WHICH BY A RESOLUTION ALREADY APPROVED HAS CALLED FOR THE TOTAL APPLICATION BY THE PARTIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT OF THE 4TH GENEVA CONVENTION, CALLS WITH EQUAL URGENCY FOR THE TOTAL APPLICATION BY THE SAME PARTIES OF ALL THE OTHER GENEVA CONVENTIONS, AND IN PARTICULAR OF THOSE PROVISIONS WHICH RELATE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR, THE SICK AND WOUNDED AND CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT. END TEXT

7. ISRAELI DELEGATE SOUGHT FLOOR TO EXPLAIN HIS DECISION NOT TO VOTE OR EVEN ABSTAIN ON THIS RESOLUTION, BUT CHAIR REFUSED TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS, CONSIDERING DISCUSSION TO BE COMPLETED.

8. COMMENT: CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP CLEARLY WANTED TO FIND FORMULA WHICH WOULD PERMIT SOME FORM OF POSITIVE EXPRESSION ON GENEVA CONVENTIONS IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. WITH HEAVY MAJORITY PREPARED TO VOTE AGAINST ANY RESOLUTION CRITICAL OF ARAB SIDE, EVEN BY SLIGHT IMPLICATION, TEXT EVENTUALLY ADOPTED WAS PROBABLY MOST THAT COULD BE AGREED UPON. ISRAEL DELEGATION FELT OBLIGED TO SEEK STRONG RESOLUTION, AND USG REPRESENTATIVES QUIETLY INTERVENED WITH COMMISSION CHAIRMAN (SIR GEOFFREY NEWMAN-MORRIS, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS) TO ASSURE ISRAELI DRAFT WOULD BE CONSIDERED AND THAT ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK. ICRC AND WE WOULD HAVE LIKED STRONGER FINAL PRODUCT AT LEAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENDORISING EFFORTS OF ICRC TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE WITH POW CONVENTION, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THIS PROVED IMPOSSIBLE. HELMS

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